

Storms

by ZetaFox

Category: Halo

Genre: Drama, Suspense

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2005-07-08 19:18:53

Updated: 2005-07-08 19:18:53

Packaged: 2016-04-27 02:27:46

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,232

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: This is the story of one soldier's final moments. It is not intended to fit into the Halo story.

Storms

Thirteen planets. Millions of people. Millions of names. Dozens of friends gone, and a dozen more in line. Five years, ten months, fourteen days, and this afternoon. Only a fraction of all that actually remained within the shattered confines of my memories. Not that it really mattered, I hardly needed such things as memories anymore. I hardly needed to think at all. A storm was rolling in, thick clouds making a march from the horizon. In reality, there are two storms. One of them lingers on the ground, however. Instead of lightning, it has grenades, and instead of clouds and rain, it has tanks and plasma. Somehow, I knew I would end up like this when I volunteered. I knew I'd end up sitting in a muddy trench, with no food, almost no water, and barely any ammo. I knew I'd have to hear the unanswered cries of the wounded all day, and smell the stench of death. I knew all along, but I still volunteered.

I suppose that's what I get for believing what they said about this war. Glory and sacrifice. Hah. There's no glory in it. You die like a dog, and for no good reason. Oh well, too bad. It's far too late now, what's done is done.

"Marines, man your posts!"

My ears heard the voice, but my mind wasn't listening. Regardless, I got to my feet, my boots sinking deep into the mud with a wet sucking noise. My rifle was covered in mud, just like everything else. The trench was deep enough that we could stand fully upright and not be seen. A raised shelf of dirt runs along the front of the trench, providing a place we can stand to shoot over the top. The walls of the trench were covered with wooden planks, to keep them from collapsing inwards. There were just under a hundred Marines in this position, along with some turrets, a trio of mortars, and other

assorted munitions. However, all of it was useless. Mud clogged every orifice of the equipment. The only things that still seemed to be functioning correctly were the MA5Bs.

Among the broken devices are the men. They are nothing more than the rifles now, machines that function when ordered to. You point and they shoot. Their eyes are strange, looking at the world around them, but not seeing any of it. The individuals that used to reside within their bodies are now faded and suppressed. They lined the trench on either side of me, waiting for the next command. I thought I recognized some of them, but my mind would not give me their names.

> The Sergeant came slogging down the trench, his face a solid mask of apathy. A few Marines were walking with him, and one slipped in the mud as the Sergeant stopped to inspect us. His eyes stabbed at us, projecting something of a threat, should we fail to stand and fight.<p>

"Commence firing on my order only," the Sergeant said to no one in particular. None the less, we all took the order seriously. I turned and stepped up onto the firing shelf, bracing my rifle across the top of the trench. The ammo counter flickered to life as I removed the safety. Every other Marine did the same, the clicking of safeties, and the clacking of bolts filling the air. My sights were muddy, and barely useable. Then, suddenly, my eyes caught motion out in front of me. The sights went out of focus, and the Covenant battalion approaching our position became painfully clear. They had tanks, they had Hunters, but most of all, they seemed to have determination; something which we were lacking.

The battalion was advancing across the large, open field that marked the approach to our trench. The field rose steadily upwards, and our trench was at the top of the rise, looking down. An overcast sky hung overhead, and out near the horizon, behind the Covenant, was the approaching storm. The clouds were nearly black, and rain was clearly visible drawing closer. More mud, great, just great. The rain was not as bad as what went with it. The ammo counter on my rifle flickered out, and I smacked the side of the weapon, causing it to come back on. There was a large crack in the glass covering the screen. My finger rested lightly on the trigger, and I placed my sights on the closest Elite. It suddenly occurred to me that there were three storms. One of water, one of fire, and one of metal. Three storms, one battlefield, and a million ways to die between them.

The humming of Covenant vehicles reached our ears, along with alien chatter. Elites were giving out orders, and preparing their troops for the assault. Not one of the men spoke, all eyes were trained upon the enemy. The rain drew closer, darkening the sky further. The wail of Banshees drifted through the clouds. Suddenly the order came. I jammed the trigger down on my rifle, unleashing a sustained burst. A wall of rounds flew down range as everyone opened fire. The roar of the rifles drowned everything out. Blood sprayed the air, and bodies fell among the advancing Covenant. Screams of pain and anger could be heard. The tanks returned fire half a second later, and massive teardrops of plasma rose into the air. They hung at the climax of their climb, then fall earthwards. They impacted all around with tremendous hisses, leaving huge, glass-filled craters. None of them were direct hits, but the next wave of shots would be far more accurate.

Banshees sliced in from out of the clouds like a school of sharks, their engines screaming as the pilots rushed to get into battle. Drizzle began to fall. My ears rang sharply from all the noise. The Elite leading the attack ordered the charge with a roar, motioning his troops foreword.

"Here come the Banshees!"

I looked up and to my right. The Banshees rolled gracefully into line with our trench and dove. Thunder rolled in the distance. Plasma fire sliced the air. It filled the trench, men screaming as it burned into them. Geysers of steam were kicked up as it burned the grass and the mud. Bolts of plasma ripped the air around me, hissing and screeching. I yelled in anger, bringing my rifle up and firing at the purple craft before throwing myself down onto the bottom of the trench. Incredible heat surrounded me as the plasma singed the air. The Banshees flashed overhead, then pulled up and banked away to line up another pass. I was instantly back on my feet. Many bodies were strewn about the trench. Steam rose from their wounds, and the smell of charred flesh drifted past me.

A scattering of Marines fought on, continuing to fire at the closing Covenant. I peered over the top of the trench, and down the hill. Steam hung low on the ground, stirred up by the Banshees' plasma fire. Amongst it were the blurry outlines of Elites, Grunts, Jackals, and three Wraiths. They moved steadily towards our position, their pace never changing even as the terrain did. The Covenant infantry began to fire at us now, and bolts of plasma whizzed overhead. I leveled my rifle, and opened fire. The weapon kicked heavily, but I held it steady. My teeth were clenched so tightly that it was almost painful. The bolt slammed back and forth, smoke-wreathed shell casings flying from the ejection port. I saw a Grunt fall, tiny puffs of blue blood signaling my shots had hit. I tracked my fire over to an adjacent Jackal and watched the rounds glance from his shield. Tiny geysers of dirt appeared around him as some rounds were deflected into the ground. I saw purple blood spray suddenly as a round found his hand, which was in the indent in his shield, holding a plasma pistol. The alien screeched, and staggered to the side, exposing himself. More rounds impacted him, and he fell as one exploded through his knee, taking tiny bits of bone with it out the other side.

Where was the Sergeant? I hadn't heard his voice since the Banshees had strafed us. I glanced to my right and down the trench, then back to the advancing Covenant. A sudden fear filled me as I realised we were being overrun. Where was the Sergeant? The drizzle intensified into rain. The Covenant were a mere thirty yards from the trench. I ejected my magazine as it ran dry, and then slid in my only spare. Racking the bolt of the rifle, I backed down off the firing step. We couldn't stop them. I started to jog to my right, and down the trench. Running was difficult, as my boots were sucked into the mud every time they touched it. There were so many bodies. I stepped over them, and stepped between them, and even stepped on them. Those who were still fighting didn't notice me, and continued to fire at the Covenant.

The rain pounded on my helmet, and dripped from it's front edge. A deafening hum filled the air, and I stopped dead in my tracks. I got up on the firing step, and poked my head over the top. The nose of a Covenant Wraith was about a foot from my face. I panicked, slipped,

and fell backwards into the trench, landing heavily in the mud. My rifle landed next to me with a splash. I grabbed it out of the water, and watched as the tank drove right over the trench. Veins of light glowed on its underside, and I felt a heavy static tingle fill the air. Then, it was gone, the hum slowly growing less overwhelming. I scrambled to my feet and started down the trench in the opposite direction.

> I jogged, then ran, then sprinted. I wasn't going to make it this time. I considered all the options. The human gunfire was dropping rapidly in intensity, and slowly being replaced with screams. Suddenly, the Sergeant's face was in front of me.<p>

"Where are you going?" He asked. I realised that I didn't know. He was blocking any further progress down the trench. All that was visible of his face was his mouth, the rest was obscured by the shadow cast by the brim of his helmet. "We have to fall back," he said, "and try to link up with the rest of the company." The Sergeant looked past me as someone behind me screamed. His head came up, and he grabbed me by the shoulder and pulled me back behind him. I looked back down the trench, and saw a man lying against the back wall, steam rising from wounds in his neck and shoulder. An Elite with white armor was standing over the trench, his plasma rifle leveled at the man, should he still prove to be alive. It dropped into the trench, its eyes locking onto the Sergeant. A mere fifteen feet separated them. The Elite placed its plasma rifle on its belt, and took something else from it. It looked like some sort of handle. The Elite flicked it's wrist, and a blue-white blade of energy hissed to life. Steam rose from it as rain drops were boiled by it on contact. The Elite lowered its stance, and charged with a roar. The Sergeant snapped his rifle up and opened fire. Shimmering energy shields deflected the rounds. Splinters of wood flew into the air as bullets were deflected into the trench walls. The Elite simply charged faster.

I quickly began to back away. The Sergeant fired continuously at the Elite, but it wasn't enough. The alien reached him. It swung the blade horizontally, from left to right, slicing him in half. The halves of his body tumbled into the mud with a wet squish. I jumped and grabbed the top of the back wall of the trench, then pulled myself out. Stumbling to my feet, I began to run. Maybe I could make it to the rest of the company. I heard the Elite roar in anger at my escape. The wail of the Banshees drifted through the air once again, but I didn't dare look back. The wailing became louder, and I glanced over my shoulder. A single Banshee was rolling in to make a run on me. If I could reach to top of the hill, the trees there would provide cover. I ran faster than I've ever run, not feeling anything, other than the urge to survive. I heard the whine of plasma weapons discharging. Bolts stitched the ground in front of me.

> Something hit me hard in the back, and my leg. I felt the strenght go out of my leg and the toe of my boot caught on the ground. I fell onto the grass, and was trapped in a world of feeling. I felt an intense burning in my back. I felt the wet, cool grass on my face. I felt the Banshee scream overhead, the air swirling violently in its wake. I felt very calm. I decided that dying now would do just fine. Here, at the apex of the three storms.<p>

End
file.